

## Contributions

### DREAMING AND DOING

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"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—Eph. 5: 14.

"I slept and dreamed that life was BEAUTY;  
I walked and found that life was DUTY."

Years ago I happened upon the foregoing couplet and was struck by the beauty and strength of the statements, but I am sure I did not then realize what was in the selection, though I was so impressed that I copied it on a piece of paper which I used for a book-mark for some time.

In poetry, words are often used in a strained or altered sense, so that it sometimes requires much study to arrive at their true meaning, on this account I will change the lines to prose, giving my rendering of the words which seem to need explanation.

In my sleep I dreamed that true living was honorable, glorious, beautiful, but when I waked, I realized that true living was humble, homely and thought demanding.

Have we any dreamers here? Do you dream of your future life? I think most young people do, perhaps not in their sleep, but I think that our text refers more to day-dreaming than the dreams of sleep. To every dreamer there will come, sooner or later, an awakening and to some it may be a rude one, shattering long worshiped idols, and leaving the dreamer upon a bed as as uncomfortable as Jacob's pillow of stone.

It may not be wrong to indulge in such dreaming. It is said that no one ever shoots higher than he aims, and it may be that these dreams will help a young person to set his mark high, but the dreams must not be allowed to interfere with homely duty. The dreamer who grumbles when called to "fill the wood-box," or "wash the dishes," to "feed the pigs," or "milk the cows," has not yet awakened in the sense of our text, is yet as our dead according to our scriptural text and Christ will not "shine upon them." (R. V.) The great failing of these dreamers is that they are likely to neglect some humble—I had almost said menial—duties, while they are waiting for a call to do some great and noble work. This age, it seems to me, is becoming a pre-eminently missionary age, and now if there be a dreamer here, I would ask you what Christ commanded in this matter. You know, he said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." What then? Did he command them to go? "Pray ye, therefore," says He, "the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."

There are several things worthy of note in this passage. First, we notice that it is the Lord's harvest. We are not responsible unless we be called as laborers for him. The Lord is doing a great work and I have the faith to believe that he will see that every nation has the opportunity to hear the gospel of peace ere the end comes. But we, if we do his will, must labor on patiently in the place he has appointed for us, and he will know where to find us if he has other work for us to do. Of course it is natural that we should desire to accomplish something of importance in the Lord's work but it has been said, and I think truly: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Another point in this connection is, that if we are not trust worthy in little things, we will never be called to a higher place. The armor-bearer, if he does his duty well, will soon be promoted, but if the captain finds that he is not at his post when wanted he will not think of him as one worthy of a higher place.

It may be claimed that in the "great commission." Christ commanded us to go and teach all nations, but on a careful examination we learn that this command was directed to the Apostles,—literally, "those sent,"—those who, for three years, had been under his special care and training, but I am digressing in discussing this point, as we were discussing the necessity of faithfulness in little things.

Paul discusses this matter of the diversity of gifts, in his first letter to the Corinthians at the 12th chapter beginning at the 4th verse, teaching clearly, that those having the more honorable gifts are not to be elevated on this account, nor inclined to "look down upon" a more humble brother.

But he does say that we shall earnestly desire the greater gifts. (1 Cor. 12: 31.) By this I am reminded of the saying of the poet:

"The treasure-trove, the gifts we ask of fate,  
Come far apart, come mildewed, come too late.  
What says the legend? 'All that man desires  
Greatly at noon, he gains ere day expires.'  
But age craves not the fruits that gladden youth,  
It sits among its vineyards, full of ruth,  
Finding the owners right to what is best  
Of little worth, without the seekers' zest."

But this is from a temporal point of view, and the spirit knows no youth or age, and I am glad to say to you that I have lately heard another testimony on this subject. It was a recently published incident from the life of Adoniram Judson the father of the mission in Burmah. He labored for fifteen years without a single convert but he was faithful and at last he could count the converts by thousands. But this incident of which I speak was on a different line. It seems that he had long had an earnest desire to be permitted to declare Christ's

gospel to the Jews. But when he had grown old and his health was undermined, he did not expect that he would ever be able to do so. About this time his wife was reading to him, if I mistake not, from a missionary journal that a friend had prepared a sketch of Dr. Judson's life and work, a certain Jew happened to notice it, was so impressed with it that he translated it into his own language and called the attention of his friends to it. The final result was that a number were converted, a church was formed and the cause was prospering.

As she finished the article, Mrs. Judson noticed that her husband was in tears, surprised and anxious she inquired the cause of his emotion.

"Oh!" says he, "I am again reminded that not one heart's desire, for which I have plead earnestly with God has ever been denied me. It has not always been accomplished according to my expectations but the work has been done and well done."

So, my friends, if you are zealous in the missionary cause, "Pray ye to the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest," and if in your heart of hearts you feel as you commune with God that you are called to this work, I shall find no fault, if you continue in the language of the prophet: "Here am I, send me." Isa. 6: 8. But in our words and deeds, let us ever be careful to show forth our profession as followers of the meek and lowly man of Nazareth. My work, as a rule, has not been such as to give my counsel any particular weight, but in my life I have met with a few surprises, some humiliating some joyous, when words and deeds, long since forgotten by myself, have been treasured up by another, in some cases as oracles, leading the recipient to a higher and nobler life.

We are but unprofitable servants at the best. But is there not felicity in the thought that, as we approach the bar of God, trembling at our unworthiness, there may be some sweet soul by our Advocate, telling of what great things we have done for him. Is not this thought enough to cause us to guard our words and deeds as we hold intercourse with our fellow men?

Let us use every effort to smooth the pathways of our brethren who are sent to us in Christ's stead. What matters it if our own feet are torn and bleeding at times if we can only remember what he suffered for us.

Not to gain the plaudits of the world, but the "Well done, good and faithful servant;" not to win fame's laurels, but the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away,—these are indeed things worth living for.

If God rules at all, he rules in all.